

*The Groans of a Saint, under the
Burden of a Mortal Body.*

A
S E R M O N

Preached at the

F U N E R A L

O F

Mr. *JOHN BELCHER*,

Late Minister of the Gospel,

April 1. 1695.

By *JOSEPH STENNETT.*

L O N D O N,

Printed by *J. D.* for *Andr. Bell*, at the Cross-
Keys in the *Poultry.* M.DC.XCV.

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Burden of a Mortal Body.

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April 11. 1695.

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Small as it is, I expose to the World
to the Blessing of
 (29) **To the Reader.**

THO it is impossible for me to pub-
 lish this Discourse Verbatim
 as it was utter'd; yet I doubt
 not but it will satisfy those Friends
 (whose Importunity, and not my own
 Choice has brought it to the Light) that
 I have given the World the Substance
 of it from my own Papers and Me-
 mory, assisted with the Notes of one
 who took a great Part of it in Short-
 hand, when it was Preached.

For though after all, some Expres-
 sions have quite escaped Recollection;
 yet others (I believe) as material have
 fill'd up their Room; and those that
 have been alter'd, I hope, for the most
 part have lost nothing, by receiving a
 Turn somewhat different from what
 they had before.

Such as it is, I expose to the World,
 recommending it to the Blessing of
 that God, who can (if he pleases)
 render it serviceable to his own Glory,
 and to the Spiritual and Eternal In-
 terest of those, into whose Hands his
 Providence shall cast it.

J. S.

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~~which he comes into the World, and
first wherein he passes out of it, and
how much better is his Exit than his~~

**A SERMON preach'd at the
Funeral of Mr. John
Belcher.**

~~When he begins to live, he
begins to so assay from God: when he
comes to die, he makes the last and last~~

2 Cor. V. 4.

*For we that are in this Tabernacle do
groan, being burdened: not for
that we would be unclothed, but
clothed upon, that Mortality might
be swallowed up of Life.*

THE wisest of Men tells us,
That the end of a thing is better Eccl. 7. 2.
than the beginning of it, and
That the Day of Death is better Eccl. 7. 1.
than the Day of one's Birth: To what-
ever other sense these Sayings may be
accommodated, they are eminently
true of a Righteous Man. What a vast
difference is there between the State in
which

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which he comes into the World, and that wherein he passes out of it! and how much better is his *Exit* than his *Entrance*, only because of this Transition. *Life!* He is *Born in Sin*, but *Dies in Faith*: He comes into the World a *Child of Wrath*, goes out of it as *Heir of Bliss*. When he begins to live, he begins to go astray from God; when he comes to die, he makes the last and largest Step towards Him: When he draws his first Breath, he is without God in the World; when he breaths his last, he is ever with the Lord. He enters the World naked, defiled, and helpless in a Moral as well as in a Natural sense; he passes out of it clothed with the Righteousness of Christ, beautified with the Graces of the Holy Spirit, strong in the LORD, and in the Power of his Might; and all this in order to be invested with Eternal Glory.

It is true, there is usually some Joy on Earth when a Man is born into the World, notwithstanding all those deplorable Circumstances that accompany his Birth; but how much greater Joy may we reasonably suppose there is in Heaven, when a Saint is removed from this lower World,

Psal. 51. 5.

Heb. 11.

13.

Eph. 2. 3.

Rom. 8. 17.

Psal. 58. 3.

2 Cor. 5. 8.

Eph. 2. 12.

1 Thess. 4.

17.

Ezek. 16.

41. 51.

Eph. 6. 10.

John 16.

21.

World, seeing so many glorious Advan-
tages attend his Death.

And his no wonder then if Holy
Men do often look without any ama-
zing Fears, nay sometimes with earnest
desires of their Change, into the dark
Region of Death, while with the pier-
cing Eye of Faith they can discover the
glorious *Moun* of God beyond the
Shadows of that *Gloomy Vale*.

'Tis
no surprizing thing, if, when, with our
Apostle, they compare their *past* and
present with their *future* State, what
they *have been* and what they *are* (while
here) with what they *shall be* hereafter,
they mix their Sighs and Wishes with
his, and with one common Voice ex-
press their Sense after the same manner;
—*We that are in this Tabernacle do groan,*
being burden'd, &c.

The Apostle had in the former Chap-
ter declared with how much Faithful-
ness and Diligence both himself, and
his Companions in the Ministration of
the Gospel had labour'd in that Blessed
Work, though they had many hard-
ships to encounter in the discharge of
their Duty, which yet they were en-
abled to endure with great firmness of

Mind, by the Hope they had of an happy Resurrection with other Saints, resembling that of their Lord and Master;

Verf. 14. *Knowing (says he) that he who raised up the Lord Jesus, shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you.*

That which further tended to mitigate their Sufferings, was the fervent Love they bare to the Church on whose account they suffered, as is plainly enough suggested in the following

Verf. 15. *Words, For all things are for your sakes—* But principally the ardent Zeal they had for the Honour of the Name of God, which they knew would be highly advanced in the World by the Praises of those who *observed* with Admiration, and with Joy partook of the abounding Grace that was *communicated* by their Doctrine, and *exemplified* in their Sufferings. Therefore he mentions it as their common desire and hope, that this might be the Issue of their Labours and Sufferings, in the same

Verf. 15. *Verse—That the abundant Grace might through the Thanksgiving of many redound to the Glory of God.*

Verf. 16. *For which cause we faint not—*

After

of Mr. John Belcher.

After which he opposes their present *Tribulations*, to both their present and future *Enjoyments*, and compares the *Afflictions* they endur'd with the supplies of *Grace* they had receiv'd, and with the state of *Glory* they expected. He shews how they weigh'd *Visible and Sensible* against *Invisible and Spiritual* Things, and *Temporal* Things against *Eternal*, the former of which prov'd very light, and the latter exceeding weighty, while the steady Hand of Faith held the Ballance. Which prudent Comparison he mentions as a main support and occasion of Comfort to 'em under the greatest of their Trials: For when he had to the former reason of their Comfort subjoin'd these Words, *[For which cause we faint not]* he immediately adds, *But though our outward Man perish, yet the inward Man is renewed Day by Day. For our light Affliction which is but for a Moment, works for us a far more exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory: While we look not at the Things which are seen, but at the Things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are Temporal, but the Things which are not seen are Eternal.*

Verf. 16,
17, 18.

The

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The beginning of the fifth Chapter expresses the firmness of their *Belief* and *Hope* for this Blessed State, and the eagerness of their *Desires* after it, though not to be obtained without the previous dissolution of their Bodies.

The strength of their *Faith* is expressed, ver. 1. *For we know that if our earthly House of this Tabernacle were dissolved, we have a Building of God, an House not made with Hands. Eternal in the Heavens.* The earnestness of their desires in ver. 2. *For in this we groan earnestly, desiring to be clothed upon with our House which is from Heaven.*

And ver. 3. he adds, *If so be that being clothed, we shall not be found naked.* Which some interpret as a *Caution*, intimating the *Necessity* of their being clothed with the *Righteousness* and *Grace* of Christ; as the *Condition* of, and *Preparation* to their being cloth'd with his *Glory*. And that the Apostle by this Expression, intimates the Reason why he had in the foregoing Verse spoken of the Saints their being clothed upon; namely, that he speaks there of *Glory* as an *upper Garment*, because none shall obtain it but they that are first found clothed with *Grace*. Others

See Mar.
22. 11. and
Rev. 16.
15

Others refer these Words to the *clo-
thing of Glory*, spoken of before: and
some interpret them as an ardent Wish,
which the Words in the Original will
bear. [*And O that we being clothed, may* Εἰ καὶ ἴν'
not be found naked.] δυσανυτοι. As the words
of Christ when he wept over Jeru-
salem, may be interpreted. [*If thou*
hadst known] γ.δ. [*O that thou hadst* Εἰ ἴσως,
known, even thou, at least in this thy Day Luke 19.
the things that belong to thy Peace, &c.] 42.

In the words of our Text, the Apo-
stle repeats and explains what he had
said before concerning their State in this
Life, and that which they hop'd for in
the Life to come: *For we that are in this*
Tabernacle do grow, &c.

And though these Words are here
eminently and directly applied to the
Ministers of the Gospel; yet they very
well may, and ought to be extended to
all true *Christians* in general, who when
in a serious and considerate Frame of
Mind, and under the influence of the
lively exercise of Faith, have the same
Sentiments, and speak the same Lan-
guage.

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We have herein.

I. The *Description* of the Body of a Saint while in this Life, 'tis called [a Tabernacle].

II. The *uneasy Situation* of the Souls of Believers while they dwell in these Bodies, they are [Burdened] *We that are in this Tabernacle—being burdened.*

III. Their *Desire* of changing their present State for a better, explained, (1.) Negatively, not by being [unclothed] not for that we would be unclothed. (2.) Positively, by being [clothed upon] that *Mortality might be swallowed up of Life.*

IV. Both their great *sense* of the Weight of their Burden, and their fervent *longing* after this better State, expressed by [Groaning] *We—groan.*

I. The first thing we are to enquire into, is the *Description* of the Body of a Christian, why it is called a *Tabernacle*.

A Tabernacle or Tent, is a kind of Dwelling suited to a State of Pilgrimage or Warfare; and as this is the common

common use of Tabernacles, so 'tis to be remember'd that one was made by the direction of God, and devoted to his Sacred Service, when he led his antient People through the Wilderness. And since the Metaphor in our Text may be explain'd as well by a Common, as by the Sacred Tabernacle; we may consider its reference to each of them, whereby the fitness of thus describing the Body of a Saint, to whom the Scripture often gives the Characters of a Pilgrim, and of a Souldier, will easily appear.

The Body of a Saint in this Life may be compared to a Tent;

(1.) For its *Frailty and Weakness*.

A Tent is a kind of Dwelling indeed; but a very slender one; 'tis rather a slight *Garment* than a strong *Building*; and is so far from being able to defend its Inhabitant from the Hostile Assaults of a Potent Enemy, that it often fails of securing him from the less violent Attacks of incommodious Weather. And thus it is with our Bodies, they can no more guard our Souls from the various Miseries of this Life, than a Tent can defend a Man from a Cannon-shot,

or

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or a Scabbard preserve a Sword from the force of Lightning. Nay the Body is so far from being able to secure the Soul from Misery, that 'tis often it self the occasion of her Pains and Sorrows (as we shall shew hereafter).

And as a Tent is but an ill defence to him that possesses it, so 'tis a very feeble thing in it self, and may be easily and suddenly pull'd down: and may in this respect well denote the weakly and changeable State of our Bodies in this Life, which are soon disorder'd by Diseases, and soon overthrown by Death.

As Cloth which is the Matter of a Tent is not Proof against the attacks of a little Moth, but becomes a Prey to that little Insect: so some little and un-headed Circumstances often strangely distemper a Human Body, which (to use

Job 4. 19. the words of Eliphaz) is even as gold

Job 13. 28. before the Moth, or (as Job says) can be made

is a better Thing, as a Garment that is Moth-eaten. And what the Prophet Isaiah speaks of some, is in this sense applica-

Isa. 51. 8. ble to all Men. The Moth eats them up

like a Garment, and the Worm eats them like Wool.

our Ministers of this Life can defend a Man from a Cannon-shot.

And

And indeed Tabernacles are erected but for a little space of Time, they are not built for Ages to come, as superb Palaces and well-fortified Castles are; but build for a present Exigency, with the Design of a speedy Removal. Thus the mortal Bodies wherein Men dwell are of a very short continuance; they are Garments soon worn out by Time, if not torn asunder before old Age by a violent Death, or fretted in Pieces by some lingering Disease. They are suddenly carried away (as the Psalmist speaks) Psalm 90. 5. as with a Flood, they are as a Sleep; in the Morning they are like Grass which grows up, in the Morning it flourishes and grows up; in the Evening it is cut down and withers. As for Man his Days are Psalm 103. 15, 16. Grass, as a Flower of the Field, so he flourishes; for the Wind passes over it and it is gone, and the place thereof shall know it no more. Our Strength is soon cut off, and we Psalm 90. 10. flee away. Or, as Job expresses it; Our days are swifter than a Post, they flee as may, they pass away as the swift Ships, as the Eagle that hasteth to the Prey; or in the Phrase of Ezekiel, our age soon departs, and is removed from us as a Shepherd's Tent. Job 19. 25, 26. Isa. 38. 12.

Vers. 1.

(2.) A Tabernacle is a very *mean* and *inconvenient* Habitation: 'Tis usually very straight, and raised but a little height from the Earth, to which 'tis fastned by Cords and Stakes, and may in this respect fitly represent our Bodies which may well be call'd *Earthly Houses* by our Apostle, not only in regard of their *matter*, and of the *place* of their Residence, but also in respect of the *Influence* they have on our Souls, because they incline us to Earthly-mindedness, and make us narrow-spirited, because they so much confine us to things below, and hinder us from serving God with that Freedom and *Largeness* of Heart, and soaring aloft to converse with Heavenly Things with that Ease and *Readiness* that becomes us.

The *Vail* of our Flesh hinders our Souls from taking a distinct and clear View of things that are *near* and obvious, and renders things *remote* scarce discernible; as the covering of a Tent obstructs the Prospect of him that is inclosed in it. A Believer has some discerning of many great and important Truths; but his knowledg of them is obscure and indistinct; like the confus'd sight of the

Blind

Blind-man in the Gospel, who when his Eyes began to be opened saw *Men*, but could not distinguish them from *Trees* Mark 8. 24. but by their Motion: He sees some things distant in Futurity, but 'tis as *through a Glass and darkly*; he really sees *and knows*, but 'tis very imperfectly, and *but in part*; tho *he knows the only true God*, yet he can't see him as he is in this Life, for *no Man can thus see God and live*. 1 Cor. 13. 12. John 17. 3. 1 John 3. 2. Exod. 33. 20.

'Tis true indeed notwithstanding the meanness of the accommodations of Tents, yet necessity has often constrained the greatest Princes to make use of 'em; but they are by no means to be compared to those magnificent Mansions, where their choice leads them to reside: For who would set the sordid Tents of the wild *Arabs* in competition with the sumptuous Palaces of Kings? No more is the present vile and despicable Condition of the Bodies of the Saints, to be compared to that State of Beauty and Honour wherewith those of our first Parents were originally adorned, much less to that State of Immortal Glory and Perfection, with which themselves shall hereafter be attired: For whereas they

Cant. 1. 5. are now as the *Tents of Kedar* squalid and deform'd, they shall then be bright and comely as the *Curtains of Solomon*.

But further, as the Bodies of Believers are like *common Tabernacles* for their Frailty and Meanness by Nature, so they may be liken'd to the *Sacred Tabernacle* (which was fram'd by the special appointment of God) in respect of the Use and Service they are devoted to, and of the Honour they receive by *Grace*. They are *Tabernacles* as they are the Tenements of their own Spirits, and sacred Ones as they are the Habitations of the Spirit of God; for their Bodies are consecrated to his Service as well as their Souls: The *Members* of their Bodies are *instruments and servants of Righteousness*, *Vessels* which their Souls possess in *Sanctification and Honour*; some of them are peculiarly dignified in the Service of God, like those *Utensils* which were both of special use and ornament in the Sanctuary. The *Head* of a Saint (like the *Candlesticks* of the *Tabernacle*) holds a constant Light of Divine Truth and Wisdom, while his Heart like the *Sacred Altar*, retains a never to be extinguished Fire of Divine Love

Rom. 8. 13,

and 18.

1 Theff. 4.

4.

Love and Zeal: his Organs of Speech are like the Silver Trumpets, and other Musical Instruments of the Sanctuary devoted to the Glory of God, and employed to praise him *in the Beauty of Holiness*, while the Soul that resides in this Tabernacle, like the Anointed Priest, continually officiates before God, and devotes her noblest Powers to him for a Spiritual Sacrifice. Nay, the Bodies of Christians are sometimes called *Temples*. *What, know you not* (says the Apostle) *that your Body is the Temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you?*—And again—*Ye are the Temple of the Living God,* God hath said, *I will dwell in them and walk in them, &c.* They are Temples now in comparison of what they formerly were before Conversion, when they were *Cages of every unclean and hateful Bird*: But Tabernacles compar'd with what they shall be when model'd according to the Pattern in the Mount, I mean the Temple of our Lord's Sacred Body, the present Glory of which was formerly represented in his Transfiguration on Mount Tabor.

1 Chron. 16. 29.

2 Chron. 20. 21.

1 Cor. 6.

2 Cor. 6. 12.

Rev. 18. 2.

Heb. 8. 5.

Joh. 2. 21.

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The 2^d thing we are to consider is,

II. The *uneasy Situation* of a Believer's Soul, while she dwells in this Earthly *Tabernacle*, express'd by her being [*Burdened*].

How slight and fickle soever these Tabernacles are in respect of their natural Frailty and Mutability; yet they are heavy Burdens to the Souls that inhabit them, in regard of the Troubles they expose them to: and though they are honour'd in the Service of God in some degree together with their Souls, yet in their present imperfect State they are rather Incumbrances than Helps to them, and occasion 'em much more Affliction than Comfort, inso-much that experienc'd Christians, tho they find it reasonable to rejoice (as the *younger Jews* did at the Building of the 2^d Temple) that their Bodies are made Sacred Tabernacles, and render'd fit in some measure for the Service of God in the State of *Grace*; yet they see much more cause to bewail their unhappiness, when they consider how much less capable they are either of serving or enjoying Him in their *present* Condition, than they shall be in their *future* State
of

of *Glory*; as the *Old* Inhabitants of *Zion* could not refrain weeping, while *Ezr. 3. 12* the view of the Foundation of the *new* *13.* Temple brought to mind the greater Beauty and Glory of their *antient* One.

Both the Word of God and Experience assure us, That *the Afflictions of* *Pl. 34. 19.* *the Righteous are many*, while their Souls sojourn in these incommodious Tene-ments; and therefore our Apostle seems rather to call them Tabernacles in Allu-sion to those of *Common*, than to that of *Sacred* Use, though we have not thought meet to omit comparing them to the *Latter*, as some alleviation to the discouraging weight Christians groan under from those Inconveniencies and Evils occasion'd by their frail Bodies, which give them a far greater resem-blance to the *former*. For,

1. Our Bodies occasion much of the *Ignorance* and *Error* of our Souls, and much obstruct their advances in *Know-ledge* and *Truth*.

2. They cause us to *sin*, and hinder our Progress in *Holiness*.

3. They procure us much *Sorrow* and *Misery*, and prevent us of much *Com-fort* and *Joy*.

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1. They occasion much *Ignorance* and *Error* in our Souls, and hinder our proficiency in *Knowledge* and *Truth*, and this many ways.

(1.) The Necessities of our Bodies lay claim to a considerable part of our Time, and to a great share of our Thoughts, and thereby hinder us from meditating on Spiritual Objects with that constant application of Mind which is requisite for the advancement of our Knowledge, and for the enlargement of our Experience to any great Degree. Since Men were condemned to toil and labour, and to eat their Bread in the Sweat of their Brows, they are all more or less incumber'd with worldly Cares; and spend no small part of their Time either in projecting and providing what they shall Eat and Drink, and what they shall put on; or in refreshing their Bodies with Food and Sleep and other necessary Recreations, especially when they are very Weak and Crazy; so that the opportunities of Meditation but seldom occur, and when they do, are often abridged by many unthought of Avocations. Thus while we are busied about the Conservation of our Bodies, our

Gen. 3. 17,
18, 19.

our Souls must needs want that Cultivation and Improvement they are capable of.

And this time were the less to be regretted if we kept within the due Limits assign'd us by the Divine Will, in providing for our Bodies, and did not foolishly embarrass our selves with many fruitless Employments and unnecessary Cares. Nature, especially when instructed by Grace, would be satisfied with mean things, which much less time would procure than what is usually spent in over-delicate *Pampering*, and in over-curious *Attiring* these Mortal Bodies; in endeavouring to make a splendid appearance in the World our selves at present, and to furnish our Posterity with Means of filling up a great Figure in *succeeding* Times. We are so very prone to debase our Souls to an inordinate pursuit of the Pleasures of Sense, (the regular and moderate use of which was wisely ordain'd for the Preservation of our Bodies) that the most mortified Persons find it no easy Task to keep a due *Equilibrium*, in providing for the Necessities of the Soul and Body; so as to give the *one* convenient Recruits

without much disturbing the Operations of the *other*; to entertain the *Body* with Food and Raiment, and such like Conveniencies, without tainting the *Soul* with Earthly-mindedness and Sensuality.

Nor does the Variety of worldly Cares and Labours only waste our precious Time, but strangely *dissipate* and unsettle our Thoughts, and accustom our Minds to an Habit of unsteadiness and wavering; so that when we would strictly set our selves to serious Meditation, the Traces of those many other Objects we have lately conversed with, start up in our Fancies before we are aware, and defeat our purposes of contemplating those Spiritual Things we had before us.

And we are the more apt to be thus amus'd by sensible Things, because in our present State we are more intimately acquainted with these than with *spiritual* Objects. And things that are within the Ken of our Senses often make a very agreeable Impression on them, and thereby easily attract our thoughts to them; whereas those that are *Spiritual* and Invisible, and therefore not to be relished by *Flesh and Blood*, those that
do

do not at *present* exist, but must be sought for in *Futurity*, soon escape our attention and disappear, unless the Eye of Faith be kept in a very steady Posture, which is difficult to be done amidst the various diversions the Senses and Fancy are continually giving us.

So that if great *attention* and constant *application* of Mind are necessary to the obtaining of a great degree of true Knowledg; if it be needful, as the *Wise Man* directs, to incline our Ears to *Wisdom*, and to apply our Hearts to *Understanding*—To seek her as *Silver*, and to search for her as hid Treasures: Not to suffer her sayings to depart from our Eyes, and to keep them in the midst of our Hearts; To hear her watching daily at her Gates, and waiting at the Posts of her Doors, &c. Then 'tis certain that our Bodies in their present condition must needs be an hindrance to our knowledg of the deep things of God; seeing they take up so much of our Time, and ingross so many of our Thoughts.

(2.) They not only hinder our Progress in the way of Knowledg, but also cause us to wander out of it; and as they keep us in much Ignorance, so they betray

betray us into many *Errors*. Sensible Things, by means of our Bodies, so easily stir up our *Passions*, and so strongly impress our *Imaginations*, that our *Understandings* are often clouded, and our *Judgments* corrupted by them. The *lower* Region of the Soul sends up so many gross and dark *Steam*s into the *Upper*, that we seldom attain that *clearness* and *simplicity* of Mind which is requisite to make a Judgment of things, after an unbiass'd and uncorrupt manner: For Truth is so commonly attended with *Self-denial*, and our *Carnal Interest* so much on the side of Error, that when

Gal. i. 18. we confer with *Flesh and Blood* (as we are too prone to do) in our enquiries after Truth, 'tis no wonder if we embrace

Isa. 5. 20. its opposite, putting *Darkness* for *Light*, and *Light* for *Darkness*.

(3.) While we are in the *Body*, we dwell with Men that have Bodies made like ours, and who by means of their near Alliance and intimate Conversation with us, often lead us out of the way of Truth, and cause us to adopt those false Opinions which they have foolishly entertained, especially such of them as are made currant by long *Prescription*,
and

and by the common *Vogue* of Mankind. For we easily receive impressions from the Motions and Manners of those with whom we usually converse: As Iron Prov. 27. *sharpeneth Iron, so a Man sharpeneth the* 17. *countenance of his Friend.* And as in Ver. 19. *Water Face answers to Fate, so, doth the Heart of Man to Man.* The very Looks and Gestures of our Fellow-Creatures engage us into a kind of *Sympathy* with them: their *Words*, their *Actions*, and the very *Air* of their Countenances are so artificially managed when they would persuade us to embrace their Sentiments, that they too often strike the *Organs* of our Senses and Imagination powerfully enough to inspire our Minds with the same Sentiments and Passions which are cherished in their own; and thus the Conversation even of great and wise and good Men, sometimes has an evil Influence upon us, because we are apt to give that deference to them, which is only owing to Truth; and to treat 'em as if they were Lords over our Faith, rather than helpers of our Joy.

2 Cor. I.
24.

(4.) Again, as by expending so much of our Time, and so much of the Strength

Strength of our *Thoughts* in the pursuit of Earthly things, and by abandoning our selves to the ill Conduct of our own *Passions*, and to the groundless *Opinions* of others; the Eyes of our Minds must needs be render'd unsteady, dim and short-sighted, and so give us *confus'd* and sometimes *false* representations of things; so that Folly and *Guilt* of our own, which conspire with those other unhappy Circumstances to occasion our Wanderings, often provoke the *Spirit of Truth*, in whose Light we see Light, to withdraw his Divine Beams, and to leave us groping in the Dark, as a just Punishment for having diverted our Minds from the lovely Object of Truth, to follow the giddy Illusions of our own Fancies, or those of other Men; and as a proper mean to convince us, That

Psal. 36. 9. *they that observe lying Vanities forsake their own Mercy.*

Jon. 2. 8.

'Tis then sufficiently evident, that the Mortal Bodies wherein the Souls of Believers reside, are a great Occasion of their *Ignorance* and *Error*, and upon this account they must needs be burdensome to them;

As they are also,

2. Be-

2. Because they are a great Occasion of their *Sins*, and much obstruct their Progress in *Holiness*. And,

(1.) This is a necessary Consequence of what has been already insisted on; For Ignorance and Error not only render our *good* Works very imperfect, but often make us guilty of *Evil* ones. Our false Notions excite irregular *Desires*, and these issue in criminal *Actions*: For if the Understanding be clouded, and the Judgment perverted, the Will must needs go astray; if we have false conceptions of things in our *Heads*, we shall have disorderly Motions in our *Hearts*, and out of the abundance of the Heart the Mouth speaks; and other external Actions are govern'd by the inward Inclinations of the Soul, as the Hand of a Watch is guided by the Spring and Wheels of the Movement. Mat. 12. 34.

And as Error occasions Sin, so on the other Hand Sin is the Cause of Error. The Corruption of the *Heart* sends up dark Mists into the *Head*; and when the *Will* has taken a wrong Bias, it perverts the Judgment. We are very prone to believe those Notions to be true, which indulge our carnal

mal Inclinations, and are easily induc'd to judge that *lawful* and fit to be done, which we find our selves strongly inclin'd to do, and by this means we are tempted to call *Evil Good, and Good Evil*. And if *purity of Heart* clarifies the Mind, and disposes it to see and know God, then the Pollution of Sin must necessarily render it unfit for Divine Contemplation. Thus Error and Sin in a continual Succession, propagate and uphold one another.

(2.) *Original Corruption* is so interwoven in the very constitution of our Bodies since the Fall, that our Souls are no sooner join'd to them, but they are polluted by them: We are *shapen in Iniquity and conceiv'd in Sin*, and consequently are *estranged even from the Womb, and go astray as soon as we are born, speaking Lies*. Sin that defil'd the Souls of our first Parents, did not only spread its malignant Influence on *their Bodies*, but extends its Contagion to *those of their Posterity* throughout all Generations; so that all humane Bodies being tainted with the subtil Venom at their very Formation, convey the Infection to the Souls that join them by means of the

the close Union the great Creator contracts between them. 'Tis no wonder then that a Disease so deeply rooted is not to be entirely cur'd, while our Bodies remain in their present State; and though that Principle of Holiness which reigns in the Hearts of Believers, not only *bridles*, but in some degree *subdues* and *mortifies* this inveterate Evil, yet while these *Houses of Clay* retain their present Form and Texture, they will never be entirely purified from this fretting *Leprosy*. This *Old Heaven* will not be utterly purg'd out, however Grace may allay its *Sourness*, nor this *Root of Bitterness* quite extirpated; however Grace may crop its *Branches*. But these Bodies will still cramp the Motions of their Souls when they aspire Heavenward, and too often incline them to mind Earthly Things; till Death shall *open* them a Door of Liberty, and by *dislodging* them from their uneasy Dwelling, *deliver* them from all the Incumbrances under which they groan.

(31) As our Bodies are the *Means* of conveying those vicious *Impressions* that originally corrupt our Souls; so they often prove

prove the unhappy *Instruments* of putting the sinful Projects of our Minds in *Execution*, and are prompt and ready to *fulfil* those evil Desires which they have first *excited*: So that we have occasion, even after our Regeneration, to complain (with the Apostle) of a Law in our Members warring against the Law of our Minds; seeing the Members of our Bodies often become the Occasion of *finishing* Sin, as well as of *beginning* it. And though the evil inclinations and purposes of our Hearts make us sufficiently guilty in the sight of that God, who
 Rom. 7. 23. *searches the Heart and tries the Reins*; yet the execution of these sinful Dictates of the Mind by the Members of the Body, render us yet more criminal, both in the account of God and Men: for this
 Jer. 17. 10. *is to finish and bring forth Sin* after it is *conceiv'd*, 'tis in a sort to advance it to its *Height* and Perfection, to cherish the
 Jam. 1. 15. *Cockatrice-Egg* till it becomes a *fiery flying Serpent*; and the more publick the Commission of any Sin is, the more offensive it is, for this is by *external* Actions to justify and approve the *inward* Impurity of the Heart, 'tis to add to the visible disorder and confusion of the
 Isa. 14. 29. *World*;

World; to lay stumbling-blocks by the evil example of it in the Way of the *Weak*, and to give occasion to *Libertines* to blaspheme Religion; 'tis openly to oppose and affront the Almighty: and when a Man sins after this manner, he may be said in the Language of the Prophet, *so far to have done evil things as he could.* In a word, what the Apostle *James* says of one Member of the Body (*viz.* the Tongue) may be also said of the rest of them when abus'd to sin, they are *a World of Iniquity*—*Jam. 3. 5, they set on Fire the course of Nature, and are themselves set on Fire of Hell—They are unruly Evils, full of deadly Poison.* Ver. 9. And this may serve to explain our Apostle's meaning when he calls our Sins our *Flesh*, our *Members*, and *the Deeds of the Body.* Gal. 5. 17. Col. 3. 5. Rom. 8. 13.

(4.) The natural *Affinity* that is between our Bodies and other *material* things, is a great Snare to us, and betrays us into Sin, as well as misleads us into Error, (as we have observed before) so that we meet with almost as many Temptations as we meet with sensible Objects in the World; for these sometimes work so much upon our

C

Love

Love and Hope and Fear, according to the Sensations of *Pleasure or Pain* they occasion us, that they steal away our Affections from God, whom we ought to

Deut. 6. 5. *love with all our Heart, with all our Soul*

Psal. 62. 1, 2. *and with all our Strength, in whom alone*

Psal. 20. 7. *we ought to put our Trust, and whom*

Isa. 8. 13. *alone we ought to sanctify in our Hearts, in making him our Fear and our Dread.*

(5.) Lastly, The natural *Grossness* and *Frailty* of our Bodies in this Mortal State, occasion our *moral* Imperfections and Wanderings as well as our *intellectual* Ones: they are not *refin'd* enough to receive, nor *strong* enough to bear those bright *Discoveries* of the Glory of God which are necessary to render us free from *Error*, by keeping our *Minds* continually *intent* on Him, in *viewing* his infinite Perfections; Nor those large *Effusions* of his Love requisite to preserve us from *Sin*, by keeping our *Hearts* *constant* and fervent in *loving* and desiring Him: No—these Earthen Vessels are too mean, too narrow, and too brittle to contain so vast a Stock of Heavenly Treasure, as is needful to make and keep

Exod. 33. 20. *us sinless: and because we can't see God and live in this Mortal State, therefore we cannot live without Sin.*

3. We are now to shew that the Bodies of Believers are burdenson to them, because they occasion them much *Sorrow* and *Misery*, and prevent them of much *Comfort* and *Joy*. And,

1st. Upon their own Account.

(1.) What has been already said under the foregoing *Heads*, proves this to a great Degree. For seeing a Believer desires nothing so much as Immunity from *Error*, and a clear view of *Truth*, freedom from *Sin*, and a State of consummate Purity and *Holiness*, that he may know God intimately, and love him perfectly; because this Intellectual and Moral Perfection together make up the Glory and Happiness of a Rational Creature: It hence follows, that when he reflects on the contrary Disadvantages that attend his present State, when he considers that his Soul is lodg'd in a Body which both like a *Vail*, hinders him from a clear sight of God, and as a *false Glass*, gives him a delusive View of *Creatures*; when he feels it not only as a *Weight* that retards his Motion towards *Spiritual* Things, but as an enchanting *Bond* that unites him to this *material* World: this must needs touch

his Mind after a very sensible manner, and give him no small occasion of Sorrow.

(2.) The Frail Bodies of the Saints, as well as those of other Men, expose them to many of the common Afflictions of this Life. The strict Laws of Union, by which our Creator has join'd Humane Souls and Bodies together, render the former very sensible of the various Alterations that befall the latter: so that many little things that assault us *outwardly*, give us a great deal of Trouble *within*; and those Injuries and *Distempers* which our Bodies suffer, are capable of exciting very painful and grievous *Sensations* in our Minds.

And because we are necessitated for the Conservation and Entertainment of our Bodies, to converse with Things agreeable to their Nature, which are seldom procur'd without some *Difficulty*, and never enjoy'd without *Danger*; our Minds frequently anticipate Trouble and Misery by their *Cares* in seeking, and their *Fears* of losing these Worldly Accommodations.

(3.) Because the near Alliance of our Bodies to the things of this World,
is

is very apt to engage our Minds into a fond and eager Pursuit of them, it seems good to the All-wise and Gracious God, sometimes to *hedg up our Way with Thorns* by his Providence, to prevent our straying from him, and to mix *Wormwood* with our carnal Delights, to wean us from them, and to fix our Affections on things Above: as also to try and exercise our Faith and Patience, and other Graces (as he did those of Job) by various Disappointments and Afflictions, Nay, sometimes the Disorders and Miscarriages, into which our Bodies ensnare our Souls, provoke the Holy and Just God to withdraw the Light of his Countenance, and to hide himself from us in Displeasure, and while the Terrors of God set themselves in array against us, and his Dread makes us afraid, our Consternation and Sorrow cannot but be very great. For those who have tasted the ravishing Sweets of the Divine Love, and have felt the refreshing Influence of his peculiar Favour, must needs be extremely uneasy to labour under the Want of so vast a Blessing, and to feel the Weight of his severe

Hof. 2. 6.

Job 6. 4.
Chap. 13.
21.

Prov. 18.

14

Displeasure: and though the Spirit of a Man will sustain his Infirmary, yet who can bear a wounded Spirit?

Eph. 6. 16.

Sometimes again the lively Sentiments of Sorrow that affect our Souls on this Account, are aggravated by the Temptations of the Devil, who endeavours to wound us afresh with his fiery

Psal. 38. 3.

Darts, and to add more weight to the pressing Burden we groan under. And these Spiritual Troubles sometimes much affect our Bodies, and render them so weak and sickly, that we can't but complain in our Prayers, in the Words of the Psalmist, There is no soundness in my Flesh because of Thine Anger, neither is there any rest in my Bones because of my Sin, &c. And then the Smart of this crazy State of the Body rebounds back on the Soul, and makes her Burden still more uneasy.

(4.) I may add, that as Poverty, Sickness, and loss of Friends, together with Spiritual Troubles, fall often to the Lot of Believers while they wear these Mortal Bodies, so they have these Troubles increased by Persecution.

2 Tim. 3.

12.

For all that will love God in Christ Jesus, must suffer Persecution; and through

through much Tribulation they must enter ^{Acts 14.}
into the Kingdom of God. 'Tis true, ^{22.}

God does not call his People in every Age, or at least in every Place, to seal their Faith in him, and Love to him with their Blood; but yet none of them must expect to escape the cruel Mockings, the ^{Heb. 11.}
hard Speeches and Reproaches, and some ^{36.}
other Injuries with which the Enemies ^{Jude 15.}
of Truth and Holiness are upon all occasions ready to load them.

And though the Minds of good Men are commonly sustained by the Comforts of the Holy Spirit, so as to render them not only Content, but Joyful under the Sufferings they endure for Righteousness sake; yet these are to be number'd among their Afflictions, seeing they are real Miseries which their Mortal and Frail State exposes them to, the Smart of which they are more or less affected with, according to the Measures of Grace they receive for their Support: and that Grace which makes them endure these Thorns in the Flesh patiently, does not altogether hinder them from feeling them sensibly; so that they are troubled on every ^{2 Cor. 4.}
side, though not distressed; persecuted, ^{8, 9.}

though not forsaken; cast down, though not destroyed. And because the Spiritual Joys that sustain them are not at all times equal; they sometimes feel so much of the Weight of their Sufferings, that they are ready to petition Heaven for a Release from these Bodies that expose them to so many Assaults, and to cry with the persecuted Prophet—*It is enough now O LORD, take away my Life, for I am not better than my Fathers.*

1 Kings
19. 4.

Psa. 25.
17.

2dly. As a good Man finds many occasions of Sorrow in himself; so the Troubles of his Heart are enlarged by the Sins and Miseries of others: His Zeal for the Honour of God exposes him to Afflictions on every side, and his extensive Charity makes him partake of the Miseries of his Fellow-Creatures.

2 Pet. 2.
7, 8.

Eccl. 4. 1.

(1.) When he looks abroad into the World, he beholds innumerable Objects capable of exciting his Sorrow. His Righteous Soul (like that of just Lot) is vex'd from day to day, with the unlawful Deeds, and filthy Conversation of the Wicked, while he sees and hears their Impieties: when he considers the Wickedness and Oppression that is under the Sun, the Injustice and Barbarity of Men
one

one towards another ; the Indignities and Affronts they offer their Maker by their Blasphemy and Prophaneness ; the Cruelty they exercise on themselves by their Intemperance and Sensuality ; and the deplorable Folly and Stupidity of those Herds of Sinners who go merrily on towards Destruction, who make a Mock at Sin, and like mad Men cast abroad Fire-brands, Arrows, and Death, saying, Are not we in Sport ? though they are to expect they will be thrown back into their own Bosoms ; who spend their precious Moments in Sin, and laugh and trifle away their Time, even when they are ready to enter into Everlasting Burnings : When he sees (I say) and considers all this, it deeply affects his Mind with those Sentiments of Grief, which the same kind of Reflections occasioned the Pious Psalmist, and to which he gave some vent by addressing himself to his God in such Expressions as these, *I beheld the Transgressors, and was grieved, because they kept not thy Word. Horror hath taken hold upon me, because of the Wicked that forsake thy Law. And again, Rivers of Waters run down mine Eyes, because they keep not thy Law.* Prov. 14. 9.
Prov. 26.
19.
Psal. 119.
158.
Vers. 53.
Vers. 136.

Nay,

1 Joh. 5.
19.

Philip. 3.
18, 19.

Nay, when he turns his Eyes to the Church of God, to allay that Sorrow which the sad Prospect of a *whole World lying in Wickedness* has given him; amongst those Objects which are proper to inspire Joy and Pleasure, he'll find others no less capable of stirring up Sorrow and Anguish in his Soul. The scandalous Conversation of some professing Godliness, even in the Primitive Church, drew sad Complaints and Tears from the Blessed Apostle Paul—*Many walk* (says he) *of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the Enemies of the Cross of Christ, &c.* The pernicious Principles which some entertain, the vicious Practices which others embrace, the fierce Contentions which some wickedly *raise* and foment, and which others weakly *continue*; the Guile and Subtilty of some that prove *Hypocrites*, and the Ignorance and Weakness of others that are *sincere*, all tend to aggravate the Burden of a discerning Christian while he dwells in a Mortal Body, and is thereby oblig'd to converse with Mortal Men.

(2.) He

(2.) He is of so publick a Spirit, and of so charitable a Temper, that while he dwells in the Body, his Eye, which beholds so many Scenes of Misery, cannot but affect his Heart; so that he is not only a Witness of the Sufferings of many miserable People that fall under his Notice, but a Partner in their Sorrows too; and finds himself inclin'd by a generous Sympathy to weep with them *Rom. 12. that weep,* as the Apostle exhorts the Romans; of which good disposition of Mind himself was an eminent Pattern, *Who is weak* (says he) *and I am not weak? who is offended and I burn not?* *2 Cor. 11. 29.* And the Spirit of the Holy Job was fram'd after the same manner, even in the time of his Prosperity; *Did not I weep* (says he) *for him that was in Trouble?* *Job 30. 25.* *was not my Soul grieved for the Poor?* But the Afflictions of the Church of God in General, or of those particular Members of it with whom he is especially conversant, cannot but make a very deep Impression on his Mind; and because he prefers Jerusalem above his chief Joy, therefore her Calamities are a chief Occasion of his Sorrow; so that he is sometimes ready to refuse to be

be comforted, and to cry with the Prophet *Isaiah*, Look away from me, I will weep bitterly; labour not to comfort me because of the spoiling of the Daughter of my People. Or to utter the Wish of the weeping Prophet; O that my Head were Waters, and mine Eyes a Fountain of Tears, that I might weep Day and Night for the Slain of the Daughter of my People.

Jer. 9. 1.
See also Jer.
13. 17. &
Jer. 14. 17.

'Tis moreover worthy of a Remark, that we are so much more sensible of the Pains and Sorrows, than we are of the Delights and Comforts of this Life; that 'tis common for our Affliction to give us great Disturbance in the midst of many Pleasures, and by the Mixture of its bitter Ferment, to make us dislike all our Temporal Enjoyments.

These are the Burdens which make the Souls of Believers desirous of changing their State, which is,

III. The third Thing under Consideration.

And this is express'd,

(1.) Negatively. [*Not that we would be unclothed*].

(2.) Posi-

(2.) Positively, [But clothed upon, that Mortality might be swallow'd up of Life].

Which words of the Apostle some will have to proceed from a *Supposition* which they fancy he had, that himself and some of his Contemporaries should live to the Great Day of the Lord, and that they should not be *uncloth'd* of their Bodies by Death, but have them suddenly chang'd, like those of *Enoch* and *Elias*; because he elsewhere says, Behold, I shew you a Mystery; we shall not 1 Cor. 15. 51, 52. all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a Moment, in the twinkling of an Eye, at the last Trump (for the Trumpet shall sound, and the Dead shall be raised Incorruptible) and we shall be changed. And again—We which are alive, and remain 1 Thess. 4. 15, 16, 17. to the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent them which are asleep; for the Lord himself shall descend from Heaven with a Shout, &c. Then we which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the Clouds to meet the Lord in the Air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

But I can't think this is the Sense of the Apostle in the Words of our Text, because

- because he seems not to have expected the second Coming of Christ in the Age wherein he liv'd, seeing he prophesies of those Troubles that should befall the Church in future Ages, by the Subtily and Power of *Antichrist*; and because 'tis not to be supposed that he had any expectation of surviving those many Ages of Sufferings that the Church was to be exercis'd with, seeing
- 2 Theff. 2.
1 Tim. 4. Acts 9.16. God was pleased to reveal to him *how great things he should suffer for his Name's sake*; and seeing he was able to prophecy of his own Dissolution in express Terms, as he does to his Son Timothy, — *I am now ready to be offer'd* (says he) *and the Time of my departure is at hand*; *I have fought a good Fight, I have finished my Course, &c.* Nay that he and other Christians not only expected, but desired to die, is evident from those Words of his a little after our Text,
- 2 Tim. 4.
6, 7.
See also
Acts 20.
22, 24, 38. 2 Cor. 5.8. *We are confident and willing to be absent from the Body, and to be present with the Lord*: for this *Absence* from the Body expresses the Soul's separation from it, and is inconsistent with a supposition of having their Bodies transform'd in a moment without dying, as the Bodies
of

of those Saints shall be, who shall be found alive at the second coming of Christ.

The meaning of the Words rather seems to be thus; *We groan—not for that we would be uncloth'd, q. d. “not simply*
“and absolutely to be divested of our
“Bodies; but to be clothed upon, q. d.
“To be adorn'd with Glory and Bliss;
“Death is not desirable to us in it self,
“but as it is the way to Happiness and
“Immortality. For the Saints have
the Sentiments of Humane Nature common to other Men, their Souls are join'd to their Bodies with the same Bonds; and they are conscious of inward Reluctancies when Death is before them. Our Blessed Saviour himself was not exempt from Natural Fears, but had an innocent Aversion from Misery and Death, which the resolution of his Will superseded, as appears by his Prayer in the Garden, *O Mat. 26.:*
my Father, if it be possible let this Cup pass 39.
from me; nevertheless not as I will, but as
Thou wilt. Thus it is with Believers, they naturally shrink at the Apprehensions of Death, they do not desire to die simply, because they would be rid
of

of their Bodies, for they are a part of themselves; and Self-preservation is a Principle deeply inlaid in Human Nature; but because of *two Evils* (one of which is inevitable) the least is to be chosen: seeing they must either be *absent from the Body*, or be absent from God, be dislodged from their Earthly Houses, or infested with Sin and Sorrow; they cannot but on the most deliberate Thoughts conclude, that 'tis best for them to be unclothed of *Flesh and Blood*, which cannot (in its present Condition) *inherit the Kingdom of God*; that they may be clothed with perfect Sanctity and Glory, immediately upon the Dissolution of their Bodies; and this in order to be clothed with Glorious and Immortal Bodies, at the happy Day of the Resurrection of the Just. For I take both the Glorification of the separate *Souls* of the Saints, and their further Glory when invested with Resurrection-Bodies, to be comprehended in the Text. That the *former* is included, is evident from the Apostle's saying a little after, *We are confident and willing rather to be absent from the Body, and to be present with the Lord;* and

1 Cor. 15.
50.

Verf. 8.

and that we are not to exclude the *Lat-
ter*, appears from the last Clause in our
Text, which the Apostle mentions as
the *Hope* of Believers, and the *Reason*
of their willingness to change their
State; namely, [*that Mortality might
be swallowed up of Life*] that is, that
Mortality might vanish and disappear,
and Eternal Life take place and succeed
it, the full accomplishment of which
cannot be before the Resurrection,
when these mortal Bodies shall have put
on Immortality; for then (as this Apo-
stle expressly tells us) *that Saying* (equi-
valent to this) *shall be brought to pass*, 1 Cor. 13.
Death is swallowed up in Victory. I 53, 54.

shall therefore consider the Words in
both Respects, seeing the *immediate*
Glory of the departed Spirits of Holy
Men, and their *ultimate* Perfection and
Bliss, when rejoin'd to their immorta-
lized Bodies, do both dispose those who
hope for a Share in this Glory, to a
willingness to be unclothed of their
Mortal Bodies.

(1.) The Glory which the Saints
hope to arrive at immediately upon their
leaving their Bodies, inclines them to be
willing they should suffer a Dissolution
by Death. D That

That a Believer enters into a State of Bliss immediately after Death, depends upon a supposition of the *Immortality* of the Soul of Man, and so of its *Capacity* of Happiness or Misery when separate from the Body, which is a *Principle* so generally allow'd, that I shall not insist long on the Proof of it, but content myself in shewing you, that our Apostle firmly believ'd it, and expresses it plainly enough in several other Passages of his Epistles, as well as in this *Chapter*.

Verf. 8.

Here he tells us (as has been observed before) that he expected to be *present with the Lord*, while *absent from the Body*; which words are too plain for our purpose to need a Comment. He elsewhere confesses himself in a great Strait, whether to choose Life or Death, because of the great Advantages he should have on the *one* Hand of enjoying the Beatifick Sight of God by dying; and on the *other* of doing him and his Church much Service by his Life.—To

Philip. 1. *me to live is Christ, and to die is Gain;*
 21, 22, 23, *but if I live in the Flesh, this is the Fruit*
 24, 25. *of my Labour: yet what I shall choose I know not, for I am in a Strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart and to be*
 with

with Christ, which is far better: Nevertheless to abide in the Flesh is more needful for you, &c. Now can it be thought if he had believed that his Soul would be render'd by Death as insensible and unactive as his Body, that he would have put this supposed deep sleep in the Ballance, against a Capacity and Opportunity of serving God and his Church here in the honourable Station allotted him; and thereby of enjoying Communion with his Lord and Master in his Ordinances at *present*, and of adding weight to his Immortal Crown of Glory in the World *to come*? Is not a State of serving God, though attended with Imperfection and Sufferings, much to be preferr'd to an utter incapacity of serving Him? Is it not infinitely better to see the Divine Being, though *as through a Glass*, and obscurely, than 1 Cor. 13. not to see him at *all*? and to love him 12. after an imperfect manner, than to be unable to form the least feeble Desire toward Him? and for the Soul to follow him weakly, than to be depriv'd of all Spiritual Motion? Is it to be imagined that the Wise and Holy Apostle would have been held in a doubtful

2 Cor. 12.
2, 3, 4

suspense under these Considerations, which would easily have suggested themselves upon a supposition of the Mortality of his Soul? and would he have confessed he found any Difficulty to determine his Judgment in so plain a Case? Again, It is not to be denied, that he believ'd the Soul of Man capable of enjoying Bliss when separated from the Body, seeing he professes himself unable to determine, whether his own were not once so separated for a while (*whether in the Body (says he) or out of the Body I cannot tell, God knoweth*) when he was caught up to the third Heaven, and fill'd with Divine Pleasures in hearing Words unutterable by Mortals here below. And why does he speak of the SPIRITS of *Just Men made perfect*, as NOW making a part of the Universal Church, and as the Companions of Angels in the other World, *Heb. 12. 22, 23.* if these Spirits are in the same Condition with the Bodies they once possess'd, in a State of Insensibility and Death? And does he not call the Body a Tabernacle in the Text, to signify that it is separable from its Spiritual Inhabitant?

That

That which seems to induce some (notwithstanding these and such other Passages of Scripture) to imagine the Soul to be Mortal, is the certain Knowledge they have of the Mortality of the Body: But is it reasonable to conclude, because *Matter* is divisible and dissoluble, that therefore *Spirits* may be divided and dissolv'd too? that because *extended* Substances are seen to corrupt, therefore Substances capable of *Reasoning* and *Willing* must needs undergo the same Change? and because the *Organs* of the Body are render'd useless by Death, that the *Faculties* of the Soul all pass under the same Fate? What ground is there for such wild Consequences? What appearance of Reason in such vain Imaginations?

If then we may safely conclude with our Apostle, that the separate Souls of the Saints are capable of Happiness; we may as well conclude (*with him*) too that they shall enjoy it, when strip'd of those Bodies which keep them absent from him, *with whom is the Fountain of* Psal. 36. 9.
Life and Bliss; that instead of *earthly* Houses they shall possess *Heavenly* Mansions, and retiring from the *Visible*, be

made happy in the *invisible* World; that when the Eyes of their Bodies are clos'd with the deep Sleep of Death, those of their Minds shall *see the Lord*; and when their Blood ceases to move in their Veins, their Wills shall be most vigorously inclined towards Him who is the proper Object of their Desires, and Centre of their Rest.

But the Completion of their Bliss will be,

(2.) When their Souls shall be clothed with *Glorious Bodies*, the expectation of which, as well as of the immediate Glory of their Souls, tends to disarm Death of its Terror, and to make them willing to be unclothed of their Mortal Bodies.

This hope is grounded upon so many express Testimonies of Scripture, some of which *Prophetically* assure the universal Accomplishment of it, as others *Historically* attest the Fact it self in several particular instances of Persons raised from the Dead, that 'tis not necessary for me to insist on the Proof of it; especially seeing all that *deserve* the Name of Christians, and almost all that *assume* it, profess the Belief of it.

'Tis

'Tis more to my present purpose to say something of the excellent Properties of those Bodies which shall obtain this happy Resurrection.

We are assured by our Apostle, that both the *Matter* and *Form* of them shall be greatly refined; those *Earthly Bodies* shall become *Celestial*; that which is *sown in Corruption*, shall be raised in *Incarnation*; that which is *sown in Dishonour*, raised in *Glory*; that which is *sown in Weakness*, raised in *Power*; and that which is *sown a natural Body*, raised a *Spiritual Body*. Their Matter shall be so highly purified and exalted, that in opposition to their former *Grossness* and *Earthliness* they are term'd *Spiritual* and *Heavenly Bodies*; for Matter is said to be *Spiritual* when 'tis much refin'd; and there is a vast disparity in this respect among material things: What a mighty Difference do we see between the Earth on which we tread, and that Glorious Luminary that inlightens the World? yet both are Material Substances; Does not the great Author of the World by this Instance teach us, that he is able to advance the Matter of our vile Bodies to a very high Degree of Purity and

1 Cor. 15.
40, 41, 42,
43, 44.

Mat. 13.
43.

Dan. 12.
3.

Mat. 17. 2.

Fineness? for our Blessed Saviour assures us, that *the Righteous shall shine forth as the Sun in the Kingdom of their Father*; and the Prophet Daniel speaking of the Resurrection, says—*They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the Firmament, and they that turn many to Righteousness as the Stars for ever and ever.* And of this Glory God was pleased to give some Representation in the dazzling Lustre of the Faces of Moses and Stephen; but especially in the Transfiguration of our Saviour, whose *Face shined as the Sun, and whose Raiment was white as the Light*, in the view of some of his Disciples.

And the abovementioned Expressions may as well be interpreted *Descriptive* of the Beauty and Elegancy of the *Form* of those raised Bodies, as of the fineness of their *Matter*; for it is not to be doubted but the one will be suitable to the other. And there's reason to suppose that all the Beauties of this present World may pass for Pieces of Deformity, in Comparison with the exact Shape and Proportion, the charming Features, the bright Complexion, and the sweet and noble Air of those Heavenly

Heavenly Bodies, which shall be fashioned like to the glorious Body of our Lord, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself. Philip. 3.
21.

And it may well be concluded that they will be as useful and serviceable as they will be Ornamental and Glorious; that the Happiness of the Souls of the Saints shall be advanc'd by means of their reunion to these Spiritual Bodies, which the Almighty must needs frame for Excellent Purposes; that instead of being Clogs and Weights, they shall be as Wheels and Wings to the Happy Minds that shall possess and govern them; that instead of being *Receptacles* of Sin, they'l be *Vessels* of Sanctity; that whereas now they are as *thick Vails* that hinder their Prospect, they'l then be as *Transparent Mediums* to promote their Knowledg: and as they now are like mourning Weeds, and occasion the Spirit of Heaviness, they shall then become *Garments of Praise*, and Instruments of Joy and Melody. Ila. 61. 3.
O happy State! when the Body shall no more divert the Mind from contemplating the Divine Being, or seduce the
Heart

A Sermon at the Funeral

Heart from loving Him: no more be disturb'd with *Diseases* to give the Soul either *Pain* or *Fear*: no more be liable to Corruption and *Death*: But become an occasion of the Improvement of her *Wisdom* and *Holiness*, and of the Advancement of her eternal Joy and *Happiness*.

This is something of that which is to be collected from those descriptions the Scripture gives of the future State of the immortal Bodies of the Saints. And if the *Vessel* shall be thus adorn'd, how glorious will the *Treasure* be that shall be lodged in it? If the *House* shall be so embellished, how bright and beautiful will the noble *Inhabitant* of it be? For the Almighty is a God of Order, and does all things in due Proportion: therefore 'tis but reasonable to think that the Souls of the Saints shall be as much superior to their Bodies in their *kind* and *degree* of Glory, as they are in the *Rank* and *Order* of Nature. But after the most lively Sallies of Fancy, and the strongest Efforts of Thought, we must content our selves with imperfect Notions of this State of unconceivable Felicity; for a particular and exact *Know-
ledg*

ledg of it is too wonderful for us, 'tis high, Psal. 139. 6. we cannot attain unto it. Yet the Divine Word does certify us in general of the Thing it self, that the Souls of the Righteous, and in due Time their Bodies too shall inherit Glory; so that they have Reason to say with an Assurance like that of our Apostle—*We know that if* 2 Cor. 5. 1: *our Earthly House of this Tabernacle were dissolved, we have a Building of God, an House not made with Hands, Eternal in the Heavens.* Or like that of Job—I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter Day upon the Earth. Job 19. 25, 26, 27. And though after my Skin Worms destroy this Body, yet in my Flesh shall I see God; Whom I shall see for my self, and mine Eyes shall behold, and not another, though my Reins be consumed within me. Or that of the Apostle John, Beloved, now are we the Sons of God, and 1 John 3. it doth not yet appear what we shall be: ^{2.} but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. Though it does not yet fully appear what they shall be, yet this they know, they shall be like God, and see him as he is; they shall always behold his Face, and always be enamour'd of his Beauty;

Beauty; always receiving large manifestations of Favour from him, and always returning the highest expressions of Love to him; ever moving towards him by the most *ardent* Desires, and ever resting in him with the most *perfect* Satisfaction.

And now is it any Wonder if on the one Hand the weighty Burdens which a Saint bears, and on the other the perfect Rest and Happiness which he expects, make him,

IV. Express both his great *Sense* of the Weight that presses him, and his fervent *Desire* of the Deliverance promised him, by *groaning*?

For this Term as well signifies a *Desire* of Ease, as a *Sense* of Pain; a *longing* after future Happiness, as well as an *uneasiness* under present Misery; because these Sentiments meet together in the Soul, and mutually excite one another; the more a Man feels his Misery, the more he desires Deliverance; and the more he longs for a State of Bliss, the more uneasy he is in a State of Trouble. And therefore *groaning* and *desiring* are used in Scripture as Terms of like Import; as appears by those Words

Words of the Psalmist, *Lord, all my desire is before thee, and my groaning is not hid from thee*. And as our Apostle says, *the whole Creation groaneth to signify* Rom. 8. 22. (what he before calls) *the earnest Expectation of the Creation*; so he expresses the Desire and Hope of Believers after the same manner; *And not only they* Ver. 23. (says he) *but our selves also who have received the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we our selves groan within our selves, waiting for the Adoption, to wit, the Redemption of our Body.* A Passage that runs parallel with our Text, which says, *Believers groan—to be clothed upon, that Mortality might be swallowed up of Life*; and with those Words just before it, *For in this we groan earnestly, desiring to be clothed upon with our House which is from Heaven.* 1 Cor. 5. 2.

Though the Souls of the Wicked as well as those of the Righteous are incumber'd with Mortal Bodies, which occasion them many of the same kind of Evils, and some of them to a far greater Degree, (for if their Afflictions are not always so many, their Errors and Sins are more) and tho they desire Happiness in general as well as the others, yet they

they do not groan under the Weight of these Burdens, and after that glorious State of Liberty we have been discouraging of, as the others do.

The Reasons why the *deep* Sense of these Grievances, and *earnest* aspirations after Deliverance are to be found in the Minds of Holy Men; and in theirs only, deserve to be (at least briefly) enquired into.

(1.) The strong and lively Convictions a Regenerate Man has received, both of the great Evil and Folly of Sin, and of the Excellency and Beauty of a State of Perfect Holiness, (which is not to be enjoy'd but in the other World) make him weary of his present State, and very desirous of a Change: He is so far enlightned by the Spirit of Truth, and he sometimes looks upon Sin with so strict and severe an Eye, that he sees that Deformity and Ugliness in it, which others never discern, or so much as imagine. He measures the *Guilt* of Sin, by the *Object* against whom it is committed; and accounts it infinitely *Evil*, because directly opposite to that God who is infinitely *Good*. He weighs his Iniquities together

ther with the many Aggravations that attend them; and calls to mind against how much Grace and Love, against how much Light and Knowledg, against how many Calls and Warnings from God, and against how many Vows and Resolutions of his own he has sinned. His Conscience is too much enlightned, and too sensible to be appeased and lull'd asleep by the many false *Glosses* which others put on the Divine Laws; and by the foolish *Extenuations* and *Excuses* they employ, who cover *their Trans-* Job 31.
gressions as Adam, by hiding their Iniqui- 33.
ty in their Bosom. And the more his Mind is illuminated, the more sensibly is his Heart affected with his Guilt and the Consequences of it; so that when he remembers his *Affliction* and his *Misery*, the *Woormwood* and the *Gall*, his Soul ^{Lam. 3. 19,} 20.
is humbled in him. Thus the *Enlarge-*
ment of his Knowledg gives him occa-
sion of Trouble on this account, as we
have shewn the *Imperfection* of it does
on several others; and in this respect he
finds the saying of the Wise Man veri-
fied, *In much Wisdom is much Grief, and* Eccles. 1.
he that increaseth Knowledg increaseth 18.
Sorrow. A Sorrow which sometimes ac-
cents

tents his Complaints with Groans, like
 Rom. 7. 24. that of the Apostle, *O wretched Man
 that I am! who shall deliver me from the
 Body of this Death?*

And the same Light that discovers to
 him the Deformity of Sin, shews him the
 contrary Beauty of Holiness; The Light
 2 Cor. 4. 6. of the Knowledge of the Glory of God,
 which he has received through the Face
 of Jesus Christ, makes him very desirous
 of bearing a nearer resemblance to him,
 to become a Copy as like that Divine
 Original, as the Nature of the Subject
 will allow; in a word, to be Holy as he
 1 Pet. 1. is Holy. While the Wicked whose
 15, 16. Minds the God of this World has blinded,
 2 Cor. 4. 4. have quite different thoughts of Moral
 Purity, they see no such Excellency and
 Loveliness in it; and while you attri-
 bute perfect Holiness to the Almighty,
 as his Essential Glory and Beauty, are
 ready to say in their Hearts, not only as
 the Daughters of Jerusalem did to the
 Sponse concerning Christ, *What is thy
 Cant. 5. 9. Beloved more than another Beloved?* but
 Isa. 53. 2. as the Jews said of him, *He hath no Form
 nor Comeliness; and when we shall see him,
 there is no Beauty that we should desire
 him.*

(2.) A Believer has by the impression of *Grace* received a Spiritual inclination to Holiness, which makes him *delight in the Law of God after the inward Man*: and therefore the Opposition which indwelling Sin makes to this Divine Principle, the many Rubs he meets with from that *Law in his Members which wars against the Law of his Mind*, whereby the Vigor of his Spiritual Motion towards *him whom his Soul loves* is often abated, can't choose but give him much disturbance, when he seriously recollects himself, and make him groan after a State of perfect Conformity to his God, and after a compleat enjoyment of him. This makes him often wish he could mount from a sinful World in *Elijah's* Chariot, to throw himself into the Arms of his Blessed Lord; though he knows he must drop his *Body*, as the other did his *Mantle*, at the Ascent. Whereas the Unregenerate, whose Minds are not tinctur'd with the Love of God, who have no propension to Holiness, but are violently carried along by the Stream of their corrupt Passions, feel not the like Reluctancies and Conflicts in their Souls,

Rom. 7. 22

Ver. 23.

Cant. 1. 7

E

and

and therefore make a *mock* at those Sins which make the others *groan*.

(3.) Those that have been rescued from the Slavery of the Devil, and have deserted his Kingdom, are the chief Objects of his Rage and Malice; the Fury of that *Roaring Lion*, and the Subtily of that *old Serpent* can't but occasion them many Fears and Troubles, because they are not ignorant of the Danger of his artful *Devices*, nor insensible of the Pain of his cruel *Buffetings*: and though they have the Honour and Happiness to conquer him at last, yet the Wounds they sometimes receive from his *fiery Darts*, fill their Souls with Horror and Anguish, during the fierce Combats in which they engage; which makes a Believer often take up a Complaint of his incommodious Dwelling in the Tabernacle of his Body, not unlike that of the Psalmist, *Wo is me that I sojourn in Mesech, that I dwell in the Tents of Kedar; my Soul hath long dwelt with him that hateth Peace*. While on the other Hand the Tempter endeavours to rock the Wicked asleep with sensual Delights, and by entertaining them with a thousand Dreams of imaginary

Psal. 120.
5. 6.

ginary Happiness, makes them desirous of a continuance in this present World, as their only Paradise.

(4) The experience of a Believer (who has not only on several Occasions taken a near prospect of the World, and so discerned the *Vanity* of it; but has also *tasted and seen that the Lord is good*) Psal. 34. 8. makes him undervalue the perishing Sweets of this Life, and earnestly desire a full Enjoyment of the substantial Pleasures of the other. This makes him argue as *Jonathan* did, concerning the Honey he found in the Wilderness; 1 Sam. 14. 29, 30. if this little Taste has so *enlightened my Eyes*, and sustained my Heart, how much more both Light and Pleasure shall I receive when I shall enjoy a full repast of the same Dainties? He so relishes the *Meat that perishes*, after having tasted of the *Bread of Life*, that he cries out with the Disciples, *Lord, evermore give me this Bread*; and having tasted of this old *Wine*, he does *not desire* Luk. 5. 39. *New*, because he is convinced the *Old is better*. The Pious Soul that has had some little glances of her Beloved, Cant. 2. 9. *standing behind the Wall, looking forth at the Windows, and shewing himself through*

- the Lattice*, longs for a clearer Enter-
view ; and having heard his charming
Vers. 8. *Voice* at a Distance, desires his nearer
approach, and the Satisfaction of his
kind Embraces. Whereas the Unrege-
nerate, who have never been able to
taste the Sweetness of the Heavenly
Num. 21. *Manna*, despise it as *light Bread*, and
5. prefer to it the *Flesh-pots* and *Garlick* of
Egypt : and because they are unacquaint-
ed with the delicious Relish of those
Psal. 16. *Rivers of Pleasure*, which flow at the
11. *right Hand* of God, having never tasted
any Drops of those *Living Waters*, find
no Spiritual Thirst after them ; but de-
Gen. 3. 14. sire rather to lick the *Dust of the Earth*,
as if the Serpent's Curse were to be e-
steemed above Heavenly Blessings.

(5.) A Holy Man who lives by *Faith*,
is able to discern things that are Invisi-
ble ; and by means of this Divine *Per-
spective*, to bring distant things near,
and to render future things present ; so
that all intervals of *Time* and *Space* al-
most quite disappear during the lively
exercise of this Grace : and 'tis no
wonder if such discoveries of that Glo-
ry to one that has an assured Interest
therein, raise fervent desires in his
Soul

Soul after the enjoyment of it; and together with the pressure of the Burden he groans under here below, make him sometimes sigh out the Words of the Psalmist's Wish, *O that I had Wings* Psa'. 55.6. *like a Dove! for then would I fly away and be at Rest*; while those that live by Sense, who are *without Hope*, and Eph.2.12. *without God in the World*, either believe not that there is such a State of Bliss to be enjoy'd by any, at least that they are like to have any Portion in it themselves; or are so brutish as to despise those pure Joys, because they are unattainable in this Life, and because they are only prepar'd for, and adapted to those Minds which are refin'd by Grace; an Holy Conformity to the *Image* of God, being the necessary Condition of the Beatifick Vision of his *Face*.

Having now passed through the several Heads of Discourse propos'd, I shall add some few *Reflections* by way of *Use*. And,

1. From the Description our Text gives of the Frail Body of Man in calling it a *Tabernacle*, I might take occasion to shew not only that the Body

and Soul are Substances of a very different Kind, that the one differs from the other in several Respects, as the Inhabitant from the House or Tent he dwells in; and that the Soul is separable from the Body, and may subsist, and be capable of Happiness or Misery when absent from it, as a Man may live when strip'd of his Garment, or exil'd from his Habitation (which we have in some measure prov'd already); but farther, that the Soul is as much more Excellent than the Body, as a Prince is preferable to the Tent wherein he lodges; that there is no comparison to be made between the *Faculties* of the former, and the *Organs* of the latter, (though these are *Curiously and Wonderfully made*) and that the Body derives its principal Beauty as well as Usefulness, from the residence of the Soul in it, without which it is a useless Lump of inanimate Matter, its Members all become unactive, its Organs all motionless, and its Figure soon changes and dissolves into Corruption and Dust. But I pass over these Considerations to infer from hence,

2. That it highly concerns us to make our *Souls* our principal Care, and to this end

Psal. 139.
14. 15.

end to beware of spending too much Time, and of employing too many Thoughts in making Provision for our *Bodies*. What Wise Man would be at any great Expence in adorning and beautifying a feeble and decaying Cottage, which the next violent blast of Wind is likely to level with the Ground? Who but a Fool will deny himself *Necessaries*, that he may furnish his House with *Superfluities*, or will starve his *Body* to trim his *Clothes*? And who but a *greater* Fool than *he* will suffer his precious Soul to pine and languish under *Spiritual Poverty*, while he pampers his vile Body with the greatest *Luxury*; and will curiously deck *this* with gay Apparel, while the *other* is left unadorn'd and naked, as unworthy of his Care?

3. Seeing the Saints, however burden'd at present, have the Prospect of Celestial Glory before them, this may serve to convince the World, that their State, tho' consider'd with the greatest attendance of Afflictions, is to be preferr'd to that of the Wicked. 'Tis true, we have before granted that the *former* find many occasions of Sorrow, which the *latter* are unacquainted with; and

that *they* are much more press'd than *these*, with some circumstances of those Troubles that are common to *both*. And let us farther suppose that a Holy Man's Life were a continued Scene of Calamities; suppose his Sorrows were yet more piercing and grievous, and his Mind more sensible of Grief, and more inclin'd to ruminate the Wormwood and Gall of his Sufferings; and suppose these were prolong'd to many thousands of Years, they would still prove *light* and *short* Afflictions, when oppos'd to that *exceeding Weight* of Eternal *Glory* which raises his Expectation; and when compar'd with that load of Misery and Anguish, which the Wicked must groan under to Eternity.

2 Cor. 4.
17.

Nay the Advantage would certainly fall on the side of the Righteous, if they should *ballance* Accounts with the Wicked, in regard of their present Happiness in this Life. For though a Holy Man has many great Afflictions, he has also many *peculiar* Blessings; and if his

2 Cor. 1. 5. *Sufferings abound; so does his Consolation* too: besides, the *Troubles* of the World the less surprize him, because he is taught to expect them; and the *Pleasures*

asures of it are the less desirable to him, because he has learn'd the Vanity of them, and because his *Affections* are set Col. 3. 2. *on things above.* Whereas the Trouble of an Earthly Mind is unexpressible, when the Delights of the World forsake it, because it hath nothing left to lean upon, or to take complacency in: So that if you deprive a *Sensualist* of those Objects that occasion Carnal Pleasure, he is ready to cry out, *Ye have taken away my* Judg. 18. *Gods; and what have I more?* And the ²⁴ many restless *Desires* and troublesome *Projects* that agitate his Mind, while he pursues the things of the World; and the perplexing *Fears* that often disturb him while he enjoys them, as well as the mortal *Sorrows* that bow down his Spirit when he loses them, render him for the most part very uneasy. Add to this the frequent Gripes of a guilty Conscience, those spiritual Terrors that daunt the stoutest Heart, and shake the firmest Courage, which are often heighten'd toward the Period of his Days; when the amazed Soul finds her self hovering over an *Abyss* of eternal Misery, and is unable to lay hold on any thing capable of sustaining her from sinking into that horrible

horrible Pit; and when the *Diseases* of the Body add weight to the *Troubles* of the Mind, especially when *Sickness* and *Death* have been hastened by *Intemperance* and *Folly*, and the *Bones* are wrack'd with Pain, because fill'd with the *Sins of Youth*.

Whereas the *last Days* of a Saint are commonly his *best*, because *there is Hope* in his *End*; his Joy encreases when he sees himself near the *Confines* of the *Land* of Promise, after a weary *Pilgrimage*; and ready to lay aside his *Armour*, to bear the *Palm* of Victory, and to wear the *Crown* of Triumph: his Soul springs for Joy, when she finds her *Shackles* loosen'd, and her *Wings* preparing for a speedy flight to the *Excellent Glory*. Mark the perfect Man, and behold the Upright; for the End of that Man is Peace.

4. This may administer Comfort to Believers under all their Grievances, and should fortify them against the Fear of Death. Why should Death be formidable to them, whose *Life is hid with Christ in God*? Why should that be a Terror to them, which is an occasion of their highest Advantage? Death will only

only *unclothe* them, that Christ may *adorn* them; take off their mortal Rags, that they may be invested with Robes of Immortality; knock off their galling Fetters, that they may enter into the glorious Liberty of the Children of God; Rom. 8. 27. and rend the intercepting Vail, that they may see him Face to Face. Seeing the King of Terrors acts rather the Part of a Friend than of an Enemy to them, in silencing their Complaints, in appeasing their Groans, in drying up their Tears, and in accomplishing their Wishes: And seeing the dissolution of their Bodies, is in order to their Resurrection, the pulling down of these frail Cottages, in order to raise noble Buildings out of them: They may well cry out with our Apostle, O Death, where is thy Sting? O Grave, where is thy Victory? 1 Cor. 13. 12.

5. This should moderate the Grief of the Relations and Friends of those who sleep in Jesus: They are exhorted by our Apostle, to restrain their Trouble, and not to sorrow like those that have no Hope. We ought to consider, that tho their Souls have absented themselves from their Bodies, they are present with the Lord; and tho these are left dead, they 1 Thess. 4. 14. Vers. 13.

they shall one Day revive again, and receive a glorious Form. 'Tis true, the Souls of the Wicked shall again be clothed with their Bodies too; but their *Resurrection* will be more dreadful than their *Death*, because they shall then put on their Bodies, as *Malefactors* do their Clothes in order to be drawn to *Execution*; whereas the Souls of the Saints shall put on their glorified Bodies at the Resurrection, as a *Bride* decks herself with splendid Attire the joyful Morning of her *Nuptials*.

After all, something remains to be said concerning our deceased *Brother*, whose Death has given the Occasion of our present assembling; tho I shall not say much, partly because I think 'tis not necessary in an Assembly that knew him so well; and partly, because I think that great modesty of Speech is to be observed in such *Places*, and on such *Occasions* as these; and that it becomes those that preach, rather to instruct the *Living*, than to commend the *Dead*; and to excite Men to praise their *Creator*, rather than to amuse them with *Panegyricks* on their Fellow-Creatures. However, thus much

much I presume I may warrantably say of our *Reverend Brother*, whose Soul is fled from us to the *Regions of Glory*; That he in a good measure experimentally knew what we have been explaining to you: He knew what it was to be burden'd while he lodged in an *Earthly Tabernacle*, and through the Grace of God he knew what it was to be supported under the Weight of it, through the many Services and Sufferings he underwent for the Sake of his Lord and Master, whom he began to follow before he was far advanc'd in Years, and who was the Support of his Old Age as well as the *Guide of his Youth*. He knew what it was to groan under the Burden of Sin, having labour'd for many Months together under the Anguish of a Wounded Spirit, and under the violent Assaults of the subtile Tempter; from which he was at length happily deliver'd by the Favour of God, who dispell'd the black Clouds of Horror that benighted his Soul; and made him glad with the Light of his Countenance, which almost constantly shin'd on his Spirit throughout the remainder of his Days.

During

During his *last* Sickness, which prov'd the Means of his Dissolution, he seem'd to have much *Peace*, and at some times great *Joy* in his Spirit; declaring himself the better satisfied in this Stroke of the Divine Hand, because he was taken Ill while he was employing himself in his Ministerial Work, and expressing a very great resignation of Mind to the Will of God, often saying *he was content, because in the Hands of God*; though he rather chose to be *unclothed* of his Mortal Body, and *to be with Christ*, than to languish a long time under the Burden of Age and Sickness, and to live in a Condition incapable of rendering that Service to God he was wont to do.

He pass'd the Time of his Illness without any remarkable *Cloud* on his Soul, (so far as I could discern, who frequently visited Him) and that *Comfort* and *Joy* which sustain'd his Soul was temper'd with *Humility* and *Contrition*: he join'd the self-abasing remembrance of his *Sins* to the Hope he conceived for *Pardon*; and express'd himself deeply sensible of his own Unworthiness, as well as firmly assured of his Interest in the

the all-sufficient Sacrifice and Intercession of his Redeemer.

God was pleas'd graciously to continue to him the Exercise of his Reason almost to the last Moments of his Life. And but a very little before his Exit, after having taken his solemn leave of his Children and Grand-Children, and implor'd the Divine Blessing on them, he with an audible and distinct Voice, committed his Spirit into the Hands of God.

Thus he Liv'd, and thus he Expir'd, leaving a sweet Savour behind him, to the Praise and Glory of the Grace of God, who alone can support the Soul under the weight of a Declining Body, and can refresh her with Spiritual Pleasures, while the Agonies of Death are upon her.

To conclude, Let us follow him as he followed Christ; let us endeavour to alleviate the Burdens we feel, by the prospect of the Glory which is to be revealed; let us possess our Souls in Patience, and our Bodies in Sanctification and Honour; that when we come to put them off by Death, we may chearfully resign them to

1 Cor. 11.

Luke 21.

19.
1 Thess. 4.

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Is. 53. 4.

Mar. 8. 17.

John 17.

24.

Rev. 14.

13.

to be deposited in the Grave, in hope of
 reassuming them at the Resurrection,
 endowed with noble Qualities like
 those which adorn the Glorified Body of
 our Saviour; who to procure us this
 Privilege, was pleased to condescend
 to dwell in an *Earthly Tabernacle* like
 ours, and to be press'd down to the ve-
 ry Dust with the Weight of our *Sins*,
 our *Sicknesses* and our *Sorrows*, and now
 ever lives to make intercession for his
 People, that *where he is there they may*
also be, that they that *Die in the Lord*
 may ever live with Him: For *Blessed*
are the Dead that die in the Lord, from
henceforth; yea, saith the Spirit, that they
 may rest from their *Labours*, and their
Works do follow them.

F I N I S

Pref. pag. 1. l. r. r. expose it to